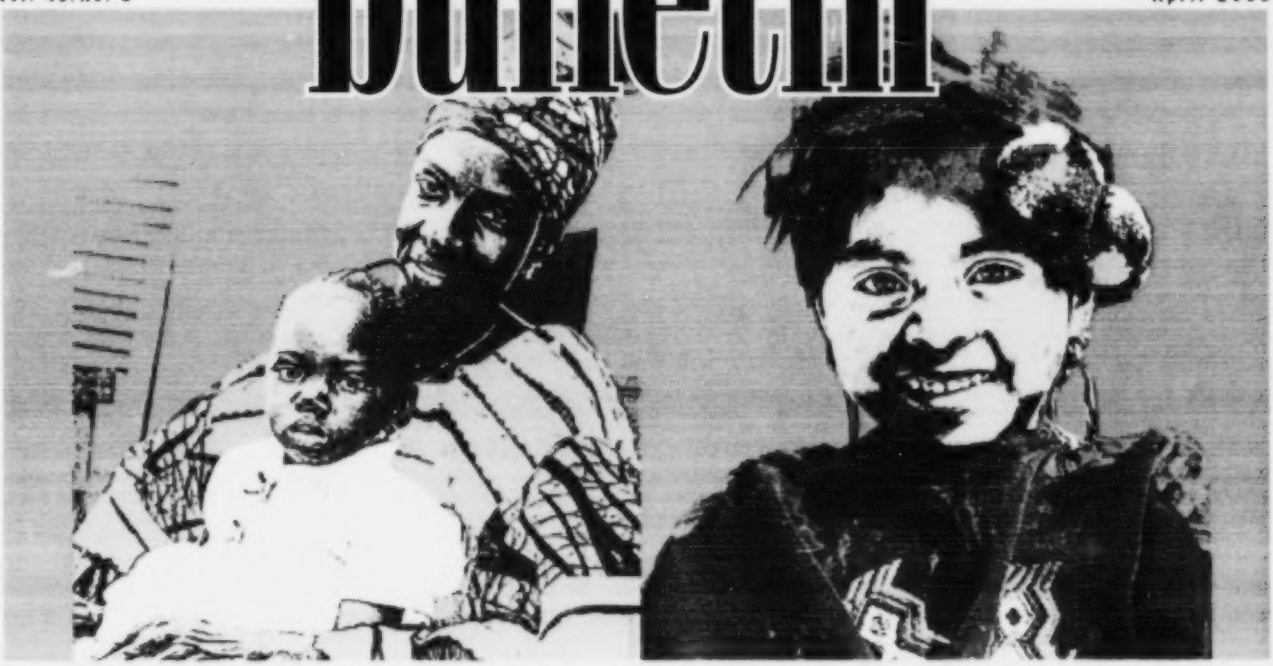
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

Vol. 48/No. 5 April 2005



Global Action Week 2005

NLTA President and Vice-President Elected for 2005-07

Kevin Foley

Mr. Kevin Foley, a teacher at Mealy Mountain Collegiate in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, has been elected as President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association for the 2005-07 term of office in a run-off ballot held on February 22.

Kevin has over 25 years experience as a classroom teacher. He is currently Vice-President of NLTA and in this position is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. He has been a member of the Provincial Executive Council of the NLTA for nine years and has chaired numerous committees including Membership Benefits and Economic Services, Teacher Certification, and Equity Issues in Education.

Sean Noah

Sean Noah, a Principal at St. Patrick's Elementary, Bay Bulls has been elected as Vice-President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association for the 2005-07 term of office.

Sean has over 22 years experience as a classroom teacher. He has been a member of the Provincial Executive Council of the NLTA for 6 years and in this position has chaired or been a member of numerous committees including Group Insurance Trustees, Membership Benefits & Services Committee, Pooled Investment Fund Committee, and Table Officers.

Results of Province-wide Election

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

First ballot - February 8, 2005

Kevin Foley – 37.54%
Fred Wood – 35.73%
Elizabeth Murphy – 21.31%
Bobby Hancott – 5.42%

Second ballot – February 22, 2005

✓ **Kevin Foley – 51.44%**
Fred Wood – 48.56%

ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT

FEBRUARY 8, 2005

✓ **Sean Noah – 57.12%**
Edward Moore – 42.88%

the bulletin

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The Bulletin is published eight times a year during the school year by the Nfld. and Labrador Teachers' Assn., 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1B 1W1
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Subscription Rate: $16 per year. For subscriptions and address changes contact Printing Services, Ext. 249.

Deadlines for material are:
May Issue: April 1
June Issue: May 1

ISSN-1189-9662

Member of the Canadian Educational Press Association, International Association of Business Communicators, and the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education.

Printed on Recycled Paper

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PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

BELL ISLAND

High school fair promotes health and wellness

Every second year the students in Healthy Living 1200, along with their teacher, Mr. Lorne Morgan, coordinate a Health Fair at St. Michael's High School on Bell Island. This year the Fair was held on December 2. The objective of the Fair is to promote health and wellness both in the school and the community by providing information and materials to visitors. It aims to increase awareness about health and wellness resources available locally and provincially.

Students in the course are responsible for contacting groups, helping to set up displays and assisting presenters as required, providing a nutritious lunch to invited guests, and cleaning up when the event is over.

All students from grades 7 to Level III attended the Fair throughout the day as well as the grade 6 classes from the local elementary school and several people from the community.

Mrs. Tina Ford, teacher, and students at St. Michael's High view a display by Community Health on safe pregnancies.

Display booths and issues covered at the Fair included: Planned Parenthood; Alcoholics Anonymous; Boating/Water Safety; Addiction Services; Kids Help Phone; Al-Anon; MADD; Drug Awareness; Sexual Assault Crisis Center; Careers; Preventing Teen Suicide; Healthy Pregnancies; Healthy Baby Club; Active Lifestyles (Fitness); Active Lifestyles (Nutrition); Bullying (Teen); Conservation Corps; and the Newfoundland and Labrador Lung Association.

In addition to the presenters, St. Michael's High School would like to extend their thanks to Mr. Gary Corbett from the Eastern School District and Mr. Mark Jones from the Department of Education who also attended.

AVONDALE

Students "Write for Rights"

Level One English students at Roncalli High School in Avondale participated in the Amnesty International Global Write-a-Thon "Write for Rights" campaign on December 10. They joined with thousands of Canadians on that day and added 69 letters to the total of over 17,000 (up to the time of this writing) that have been reported on the Amnesty website, www.amnesty.ca.

The activity began at Roncalli in October with an introduction to Amnesty International through the viewing of two films: one about political prisoners and another on the subject of violence against women. Then, early in December, the three English 1201 classes perused the Amnesty website. There students read a selection of 'Appeal Stories' outlining cases of human rights violations around the world.

To take action, students first checked the 'Letter Writing Tips' on the website and discussed some of the finer points of international diplomacy. Each student then selected a case he/she was concerned about and drafted a letter. The letters were typed, edited and mailed on December 23 and January 5. Roncalli High School principal, Brendan Veitch, kindly covered the cost of international postage. The students reported their project to Amnesty International and joined the list of hundreds of groups and organizations who also took part in the "Write for Rights" campaign. The full list of participants is posted on Amnesty's site.

"Needless to say, there are benefits to exposing students to facets of the world that they normally don't

encounter," said David Hickey, English Department Head at Roncalli High. "Publicizing the work of Amnesty International is certainly one of the best ways to do this. As well, writing to a real audience and following Amnesty's letter-writing guide adds a bit of adrenalin to the curriculum."

WOODY POINT

Students learn of French culture through hands-on experience

Students at Bonne Bay Academy in Woody Point had some fun to start off the new year. The Grade 7/8 French class constructed paper mache projects of buildings in France and Quebec. The project facilitated some learning of French culture through construction of the buildings as well as a brief write-up of each. Even their teacher, Mr. Trevor Lodge, participated in helping one group. It was another form of learning that was enjoyed not only by the students, but by their teacher as well.

Later this year, the Grade 9 French class will also do paper mache projects and it is something they are looking forward to because it will really be a "hands-on" learning experience.

Students at Bonne Bay Academy proudly display their paper maché projects.

GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR

Exploits Valley Branch scholarship winner announced

Every year the Exploits Valley Branch of the NLTA awards one student, who must be a child of a teacher in the branch, with a $500 scholarship for the highest overall average in his/her graduating year. In December, Ashli Hayes, daughter of Paula Hayes, a teacher at Sprucewood Academy in Grand Falls-Windsor, received the award for the 2003-04 school year. The Exploits Valley Branch congratulates Ashli on her academic achievement.

Pictured: Ashli Hayes is presented with her $500 scholarship by Ford Butler, Chair of the scholarship selection committee (left) and Rick Duffy, Exploits Valley Branch President.

ST. JOHN'S

School Breakfast Club hosts Kids Eat Smart AGM

On January 14, 2005, the breakfast club at Holy Cross Junior High in St. John's hosted the Annual General Meeting of Kids Eat Smart (KES). Mel Strong, Acting Executive Director of Kids Eat Smart, says this AGM was one of the best ever. According to Mr. Strong, KES attribute the resounding success to the efforts of Lisa Saunders, teacher and coordinator of the breakfast club at Holy Cross Junior High and her supporting volunteers: Vickey Murrin, Ed Taylor, and student volunteers.

The Home Economics room where students enjoy "eating smart", was an ideal venue for the AGM and the people whose support helps make that breakfast club work showed that "community" is instrumental in program success. The presence of students tied up the Kids Eat Smart AGM package in a heart-warming reminder of what Kids Eat Smart clubs are all about.

The club's collective earnestness and hospitality set the tone for other program coordinators who shared their stories. The contribution to child health, education and well-being made throughout the schools in the province was recognized by guest speaker, the Honourable John Ottenheimer, Minister of Health and Community Services. Minister Ottenheimer reiterated the message delivered by Lisa Saunders (St. John's) and Paula Dawe (Happy Valley-Goose Bay) about the value of such programs. That message could not have been more well-received by the audience, which included two other government members, Shawn

Skinner, MHA for St. John's Centre, and Minister of Education, the Honourable Tom Hedderson, a representative from NAPE, Petro-Canada, as well as the Kids Eat Smart Board of Directors and others.

Holy Cross Junior High students who participated in the Kids Eat Smart AGM, (l-r): Matthew Richards, Sarah Hutchings, Jessica Richards, and Andrew Richards.

The breakfast club at Holy Cross Junior High has also recently received $1,000 worth of free school milk. The school won a contest through the School Milk Foundation for its creative celebration of World School Milk Day on September 29, 2004. Pictures of this event were included in the December issue of *The Bulletin*. This milk will be used for the school's breakfast club.

Learning through partnership of sport and classroom

In January, Grade 4 students at St. John Bosco School in St. John's participated in a reading session with student athletes from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Retired teacher, Annette Coultas, worked with Physical Education teacher, Colleen Hogan, to initiate this learning opportunity.

Students from St. John Bosco pose with student athletes from Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Students eagerly listened to the athletes read and were enthusiastic in their thanks for a gift of books. This was followed by a time for questions; the university students warmly shared their answers and insights. As a follow-up to this interaction, a number of students, accompanied by their teachers Krista Foley and Roxanne Daley, were treated to a basketball game at the Field House.

"The partnership of sport and classroom, made possible by the teachers and University resources, enriches students' life experiences besides encouraging them to read. That's education!" said Ms. Hogan.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

2005 Christmas Card Contest winners announced

Jennifer Skinner, a Grade 6 student at Victoria Academy in Gaultois, has been chosen as winner of the 2005 NLTA Christmas Card Contest. Jennifer receives a $100 cash award and a framed copy of her winning entry. Her winning design will appear on the NLTA Christmas card that will be sent to schools, businesses and other groups in December 2005. The theme for the 2005 contest was "Christmas Traditions", and this year the contest was open to all students from Kindergarten to Grade 6.

A second place cash prize of $50 was awarded to Charlie Smith, a Grade 3 student at St. Thomas Aquinas School in Port au Port, and a third place cash price of $25 was awarded to Grade 6 student, Brandon Bank, of Baie Verte Middle School in Baie Verte.

Jennifer Skinner's winning design for the 2005 NLTA Christmas card.

The Communications/Political Action Committee of the NLTA chooses the theme each year and entries are judged by members of the Committee on the basis of their relevance to the theme, creativity, colour and ability to reproduce well. A total of 512 entries were received this year.

Ella Manuel Award winners announced

The Ella Manuel Awards were given in 2004 to Grade 12 students Amanda Green of Baccalieu Collegiate in Old Perlican and Stephanie Ivany from Random Island Academy, Clarenville. The two winners were selected from the many excellent applications received from high schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

This is the 19th year in which the award has been given in memory of Newfoundland writer, broadcaster, peace activist and feminist Ella Manuel. The awards assist young women graduating from high schools around the province in their further education.

Both young women are outstanding students, active in school and community affairs. Amanda is heading for a career as an Architect and Stephanie in Marine Biology.

Volunteers sought for research project

Participants are needed to take part in an interview on the promotion of social, emotional and behavioural growth in the school environment. If you are a classroom teacher, special education teacher, itinerant teacher, guidance counsellor or school administrator, or otherwise working in the K-12 school system in Newfoundland and Labrador, and are interested in sharing your views on this topic, please contact Kimberly Maich as soon as possible at 709-257-1057 or by email at kmaich@yahoo.ca .Your time in responding to this project would be greatly valued and appreciated!

Kimberly Maich is a Guidance Counsellor and Special Education Teacher in the Nova-Central School District carrying out this student research project through Brock University in St. Catherines, Ontario.

CANADA

Nominations sought for History teaching awards

Canada's National History Society is seeking nominations for the 10th Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. For more information contact: 1-800-861-1008, prixggawards@historysociety.ca or visit their website at www.historysociety.ca. Deadline for applications is April 29, 2005.

Florence Wood

Joan Neil

FLORENCE WOOD

On Wednesday, January 19, 2005 at 8:20 a.m., just as the sun was rising above the Carbonear hills, my friend, Florence Wood, breathed her last breath. She was surrounded by her brother, Philip, and her devoted friends. For the past five years her friends and family had fought along with her against breast cancer. Always keeping a positive attitude and encouraging others to keep fighting, she had been winning the battle until recently.

Florence was an outstanding Physical Education teacher with a Masters Degree in Administration. She taught 19 years at Holy Redeemer Elementary School in Spaniard's Bay and the remainder of her career at Coley's Point Primary School, until her illness in 1999. As a dedicated Phys Ed teacher and classroom teacher she made lifelong friends with her fellow teachers and students. She devoted many hours to extracurricular sports events, taking her students on numerous tournaments and competitions. Her students will always remember her for her organizational skills, efficiency, kindness, and generosity as she worked hard to instill in them good work ethics and positive personal character traits.

Florence was also an outstanding photographer. Her pictures demonstrate her love of life, nature, celebrations, parties and adventure. Many of these were used as fundraisers for the Museum in Bay Roberts as she was a member of the Heritage Foundation Committee. She was also committed to organizing and participating in the annual Terry Fox Run in Bay Roberts, as well as other walks for charities.

With the help of Dr. Laing and her staff at the Charles H. Bliss Murphy Cancer Center, the wonderful team of nurses at the Carbonear Cancer Unit, Dr. Lear and Dr. Humber, Florence was able to keep her cancer under control and enjoyed an active life, successfully completing most of the many things on her "Things to Do List". She flew in a helicopter and a small plane taking photos, had a ride on a motorcycle, a four-wheeler, and a skidoo. She learned to play the guitar, had several days out in a boat, including a day on the Bay with John Efford, traveled to Ottawa, Toronto, saw "Momma Mia", Chris de Burgh, the Reviews, Klondike Concerts, and numerous other shows and events. She appreciated every moment of life and was grateful for the past five years to grow spiritually and enjoy the love and companionship of those around her, including her faithful cat, Ginger.

Florence was kind and generous, giving freely to numerous charities and helping others less fortunate. She wanted to help find a cure for cancer and other dreaded diseases. She encouraged us all to enjoy everyday and "not to sweat the small stuff".

We will always remember Florence Wood. Her legacy of her photography, thoughtful acts, sense of humor, courage, determination, and positive attitude will always remain with us. She is an unforgettable role model for not only her former students, but for all who had the privilege to know her.
(Submitted by Valma Parsons)

JOAN NEIL, 1950 – 2004

On April 15, 2004, Joan Neil passed away after a short courageous battle with cancer.

After graduating from high school in Happy Valley/Goose Bay, Labrador, Joan attended Memorial University where she received her B.A., B.Ed., and later returned to complete an M.Ed. in teaching.

Joan taught for one year in Labrador and one in Norris Point. The remaining 28 years of her career were at Rocky Harbour Elementary.

Joan's teaching touched the lives of many children. She brought out the best in her students through the challenges she presented in her programming. There was no limit to the energy she'd use to create incentives to motivate her students, projects that offered enrichment to their school lives.

Aside from her classroom work, Joan's daily school life included extra activities. She took responsibility for Accelerated Reading Programs, Global Projects, Heritage Day activities, the school library (including fund raising), as well as many others.

Joan epitomized dedication, efficiency, diligence and organization. She was one of the few who had September work prepared before June's school closing.

Joan remembered staff birthdays with cakes and cookies and there was always a "blueberry grunt" at Harvest time. Nothing was ever too much trouble for Joan. She took on every task with a tireless energy. She wasted no time! She had an amazing amount of energy for such a little woman.

Outside school life, Joan was a Sunday School teacher and later became a Lay Minister at the Anglican Church in Norris Point. She was also involved with other organizations over the years including an executive position with the local NLTA.

With her spirit for adventure, within a couple of years of retiring, Joan and her husband headed north to teach in Nunavut. Unfortunately, her illness forced them to return in December 2003.

Joan's dedication to her work was rivaled only by her dedication to her family – her sons Blair and David, and husband, Howard. It is to them that we offer our sincere condolences. Her sudden death was a shock to all her family, friends and colleagues and she will be missed.
(Submitted by Shirley Dominie and Patricia Dawe, former colleagues, Rocky Harbour Elementary)

ERIC ROGERS 1929-2004

Yet he was kind or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault:
The village all declar'd how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write, and cypher too:
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And ev'n the story ran that he could gauge.
...And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

~ Oliver Goldsmith

Eric Rogers was an extraordinary man because he had an extraordinary career, was extraordinarily proud of his family, lived an extraordinary life, and when he was forced to give up his life, he had an extraordinary death. No Miniver Cheevy was he for he was a man of his time, suited to his time, and as the economic, political, and social conditions of his time changed, with his adaptable intelligence, he changed right along with them.

Eric Rogers was born in 1929 in Round Harbour, Bonavista Bay, and attended the local Anglican School in Sidney Cove until he out learned it and had to go to Greenspond to complete his Grade 11. His parents saw the intelligence in their son and scraped together enough money to give him a year at Memorial College. Eric completed his first year with honours and proceeded to take up the profession for which it seems he was destined from birth: teaching. For he was good at it, especially in the field of mathematics where he was soon recognized by both students and colleagues as a gifted teacher: inspirational, lucid, and patient. As one former student said: "If you can't learn math from Mr. Rogers, you just can't learn".

In the peripateticism of the times, Mr. Rogers employed his talents from harbour to harbour – Leading Tickles, Trinity, Burgeo (his first principal position), and back to Trinity to teach high school in the Orange Lodge for four years awaiting the opening in 1959 of a new St. Augustine's Central High School of which Mr. Rogers assumed principal. When the new Smallwood Academy opened in Gambo in 1964, Mr. Rogers, already having built a solid reputation as both a teacher and administrator, was recruited to lead, as principal, a highly educated staff to create a modern school utilizing the latest teaching methods to deliver a broad curriculum that exacted high standards of academic and athletic achievement.

Eric was a devout Christian who, from his earliest days as a teacher, was also an Anglican lay reader, leading services, baptizing the newly born and burying the deceased. He wrote his own Bible Studies and taught them with the same inspiration as he did math. He was the church treasurer for many years. He lived his Christianity, a beacon for all to follow. When health problems forced him to retire as an active lay reader he was accorded honorary membership in the Lay Readers' Association.

Like Ben Adhem, Eric Rogers served his Maker by serving his fellowman. A Lion most of his adult life, he held all executive posts at least once, some of them twice or more. He was King Lion, a Zone Chairman, a Melvin Jones Award Winner and a 30-Years Service Pin recipient – an exemplary record of service.

His community involvement seemed boundless. He was a leader in the Church Lads' Brigade, the Loyal Orange Young Britons' Association, the Loyal Orange Association and the Society of United Fishermen. He was a member of the Community Library Board for years, and a blood donor for 20 years. And yet he still found time to complete a bookkeeping course at age 54 – with honours.

Mr. Rogers [with a Masters in Education (Honours) from Boston University, 1968] retired from the staff of Smallwood Academy in 1984. In 1986 he underwent heart surgery. This health incident led him to focus his attention on how to enjoy and learn from whatever time was remaining to him. He involved himself, and others, in extensive genealogical research and loved every minute of it. And he and his beloved wife, Daisy, began traveling as much as they could to see the world and to spend time with their children and grandchildren, whom they dearly loved.

When his heart was too weak to recover from a second surgery that he had courageously undergone for cancer, and knowing he was dying, Eric gathered around him and Daisy, their three sons and three daughters to hear his last thoughts and wishes. With his house in order, Mr. Rogers impatiently waited for death, eager to inherit his Maker's promise of resurrection and eternal life.

His life was gentle, and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, This was a man!

~ William Shakespeare

(Submitted on behalf of wife, Daisy, children, Dean, Brenda, Larry, Sharon, Keith, and Kim, and Mr. Rogers' many friends, by Ray Goulding).

Eric Rogers

Workload Study Identifies Key Concerns

by EDWARD HANCOCK

"The issues associated with teacher workload are real and serious..." So states Dr. David Dibbon in the conclusion of his report of the 2003-04 study of teacher workload in this province. Entitled *It's About Time!! – A Report on the Impact of Workload on Teachers and Students*, the study addresses the many misconceptions about what encompasses a teacher's workday. It discusses the intensification of work that has occurred in recent years and how this has impacted on teachers and their students. It brings a focus to the "invisible work" of teachers, which occurs outside the classroom and the instructional day and thus is much less apparent (and, indeed, invisible) to parents and the public.

In the January issue of *The Bulletin*, I reviewed the background for conducting the study and provided an overview of the data relating to teachers' hours of work. That article also summarized some of the report's findings about how students are affected by the impact of some of the key teacher workload issues. The purpose of this present article is to summarize some of the key issues raised by teachers in the study and to examine the study's conclusions and recommendations.

A key finding of the study is that the average teacher in this province invests 52.32 hours per week on school related activities. However, in addition to quantifying the working time of teachers, the study also identified teachers' key workload concerns. For example:

- Lack of necessary preparation time within the school day is a prevalent issue. Having adequate preparation time is a critical factor to teachers' satisfaction.
- Lack of assigned time to properly prepare classes negatively impacts on teachers' interaction with students and compromises remedial work for students who need extra help.
- Individual student needs are not being met when large numbers of students with identified special needs are included in regular classrooms without adequate supports. Teachers stated that when there are too many students on Pathways II to IV included in the same classroom, the teacher cannot deliver appropriate programs to these and the other students.
- Nearly half the teachers in the study indicated they were dissatisfied with the inordinate amount of their own personal time they must spend evaluating student work and the amount of time they spend preparing for and meeting with parents. The intensification of work during reporting periods was a major cause of teacher stress.
- The requirement to do corridor, playground and bus supervision "is probably the aspect of their job that teachers dislike the most". Many teachers acknowledged that they prepare and teach differently on days when they have supervision duty.
- With an outcomes-based curriculum and an increase in the number of students who are on Pathways II, III, and IV, trying to achieve a balance between preparation and assessment is becoming more and more problematic.
- Teachers acknowledge the importance of evaluation but report significant stress and demand on out-of-school time by all the late nights and weekends required for marking.
- Class size is another major area of concern. Teachers indicated that when there are too many students in the one classroom, problems begin to develop. For example, it restricts contact time with students, restricts the teaching methodologies that teachers can use, and limits the amount of space for movement around the classroom.
- Due to a lack of sufficient resources at the school, district and department levels, it often takes far too long to carry out assessments and referrals that are required in order to properly place students.
- Many of the teachers in the study stated that the in-service related to new programs was inappropriately timed, inadequate or nonexistent. Further, required teacher resource materials are often not available.
- In many situations, teachers are assigned to teach subjects for which they have little or no academic training, resulting in a high level of frustration, classroom management problems, and high teacher workload, turnover and attrition.

In analyzing the impact of these workload concerns on teachers, Dr. Dibbon noted a chronic and persistent work overload which is especially intense at reporting times. Teachers report that school work consistently bleeds into their personal lives and that workplace conditions often lead to a reduction in the quality of service which they feel they are able to provide to their students. The demands for increasingly individualized instruction are impossible to meet because of the lack of time and supports needed to deliver same. Further, there is no time available to become adequately familiar with new curricula and methodologies.

In the final chapter of his report, Dr. Dibbon brings together a number of conclusions and recommendations. These are summarized below. (To view the full report along with a number of summary documents, go to the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca and click on "Publications".)

1. The average teacher works the equivalent of fifty-two 39.5 hour weeks in the year. If a 35 hour work week is used as a benchmark, given the nature of the job of teaching and the turbulence associated with today's schools, it is impossible to imagine any teacher being able to accomplish the required tasks in the allotted time. There needs to be some public recognition that teachers work well beyond the mythical five-hour day and contribute much of their personal time to their professional life.
2. There is a strong argument for providing all teachers in the province with a minimum of 180 minutes of preparation time per week.
3. There is significant evidence that teachers find reporting periods very intense and stressful, with a negative impact on how they are able to cope with the demands of their job. Therefore, it is important that schools be provided with discretionary leave days to be used during the school year and have flexibility to utilize these days during the reporting periods.
4. The expectation for teachers to do mandatory supervision is no longer reasonable – in fact, it is an extremely poor use of professional time. The report suggests seeking other more sensible solutions to the supervision responsibility.
5. Based on research evidence that class size reductions (to 20 students or less) are effective in both reducing teachers' workloads and increasing student achievement (particularly at the primary levels), this is a sensible strategy for improving the education system for both teachers and students. Concerning class composition, placing a limit on the number of students on Pathways II, III or IV in any one classroom seems likely to improve teacher workload conditions and increase learning opportunities for students. In relation to multi-level and multi-grade classrooms, curricula should be redesigned so that teachers do not have to prepare multiple content and materials for every class session.
6. The implementation of new programs and the provision of appropriate resources are huge issues for teachers in this province. Appropriate in-service training is a critical part of new program implementation. There is, therefore, a need for appropriate and timely in-service on new curricula and methodologies. Further, appropriate support and resources must be provided for the proper implementation and diffusion of new curricula.
7. There is a need for more data on the extent, the effects and consequences of "out of field" teaching.
8. For teachers to increase the learning of their students and to grow professionally, they must be afforded adequate opportunity during the regular school day for reflection, planning and collaboration with colleagues.
9. The job of teaching needs to be redesigned so that teachers can do an excellent job working a reasonable number of hours per week.

"The issues associated with teacher workload are real and serious..."

– Dr. David Dibbon

This study has provided valuable data and direction as your Association continues to pursue ways of resolving teachers' major workload concerns. We will, of course, continue our attempts to ameliorate teachers' work life situations by maintaining a focus on the key issues teachers have identified. The degree to which the Association is successful in these attempts, inside or outside of contract negotiations, will depend to a large extent upon our collective resolve. Progress, even if measured in small increments, is still progress. As Dr. Dibbon states in the last sentence of his report: "It is common knowledge that we are living in times of fiscal restraint, but the fact that we cannot change everything does not mean that we can or should do nothing."

Edward Hancock is Executive Director of the NLTA.

NLTA Scholarships

To obtain an application form visit the NLTA website at **www.nlta.nl.ca** and click on "Publications" and go to Scholarship Application, or contact the NLTA Professional Development Division, Tel: 726-3223 or Toll Free: 1-800-563-3599.

Application Deadline: July 31, 2005

Consideration for Replacement and Substitute Teachers

An Arbitrator's Decision

by STEFANIE TUFF

Your Association receives many calls regarding teachers' rights to be considered and hired for vacant teaching positions. In particular, questions often arise surrounding whether or not preference in hiring must be given to replacement and substitute teachers over applicants who have no prior experience with the school board. These issues are addressed in Article 6 of the Provincial Collective Agreement. Specifically, the Article provides as follows:

6.03 The basic criteria for the selection of teachers shall be ***competence, suitability and qualifications as assessed by the School Board.***

6.12 In filling vacant positions ***in accordance with Clause 6.03****, the Board shall:*

a. make a reasonable effort to accommodate requests from teachers already employed with the board in a continuing contract.

b. subject to Clause 6.12(a), give consideration to applications from teachers who have served in replacement and/or substitute positions with the Board before applications from teachers with no previous experience with the Board. (Emphasis added.) For the Labrador West Collective Agreement, see Clauses 42.05 and 42.07.

School boards have the right to establish, in good faith, the required currently modern standards in qualifications, competence and suitability for teaching positions and to evaluate and assess applicants on the basis of those standards. Generally speaking, the standards applicable to different types of positions are set out in most school board personnel policies. After making a reasonable effort to accommodate requests, such as transfers, from permanent employees, school boards are then obligated to consider their term contract and substitute teachers before moving on to consider applications from teachers who are new to the board. This language in the Collective Agreement creates three distinct groups of applicants for vacant positions: 1. teachers who have continuing (permanent) contracts; 2. teachers who are or have worked in term contracts or as substitutes; and, 3. teachers who have never been employed by the board before. While this contract language does establish some priorities and a sequence for considering applications, it is important to note that there is no requirement for school boards to hire on the basis of seniority when filling vacancies (as opposed to the redundancy/reassignment process in which seniority must be adhered to).

In July of 2002, a grievance was filed by a teacher against a school board contending violation of Clauses 6.03 and 6.12(b) of the Collective Agreement. The teacher had served in replacement and substitute positions with the board and in May 2002, applied for a permanent 75% position that was advertised for the school in which, at that time, he/she was working in a term contract. The teacher was not granted an interview and the job was ultimately awarded to a teacher with no previous experience working for the school board and who did receive an interview. It was contended that the grievor's application was not considered appropriately or before those of applicants from outside the board. The evidence established that all members of the school board's hiring panel had access to all applications for the position and that at least one panel member reviewed and considered applications from internal and external applicants at the same time and used this information in the formation of his short list.

The employer argued that the grievor's competence, suitability and qualifications were appropriately and fairly assessed but that he/she did not have the necessary qualifications for the position. The grievor's training and abilities were known to the board as a past and current employee who had been interviewed before for other positions. The employer contended that this evaluation of the grievor's application met the requirements of the Collective Agreement and that the decision to move on to external applicants was made after the grievor's application had been assessed. The employer also felt that Clause 6.12(b) should be interpreted in a manner that recognizes the right of a school board to hire the most qualified candidate in the context of an open job competition.

The Association argued that clause 6.12(b) requires school boards to look at groups of applicants

separately and sequentially. Temporally, the consideration given to replacement/substitute teachers should be completed and a determination made regarding their competence, suitability and qualifications before any information regarding outside applicants is considered. The grievor had significant teaching experience in the subject areas noted in the advertised job description and a full and fair consideration, including an interview, would have given him/her the opportunity to fully highlight this. For the employer to say that the grievor would not have gotten the job in any event only serves to illustrate the problem with hindsight – "*it suffers from exactly the same prejudices that are implicit*" in consideration being given to both groups of applicants at the same time.

In his decision, the chair of the Arbitration panel wrote that "*the primary reason for the deliberate insertion of the word "before" in the language is to ensure that the consideration given to replacement and substitute teachers will not, as much as reasonably possible, be subject to the influence of or be tainted by any information concerning the applications of outside candidates. ...Article 6.12(b) contemplates a job competition for which applications are expected from outside candidates as well as from replacement and/or substitute teachers, and since the Employer has the right per Article 6.03 to choose the most competent, suitable and qualified applicant, some inevitable point in the selection process must arrive when some of the applications from both groups may be considered together. In other words, I do not accept that a determination by the School Board in compliance with Article 6.12(b) that a replacement or substitute teacher is competent, suitable and qualified, must result in that person being awarded the position and obviating any consideration being given to outside applicants.*

The Arbitrator set out a process which would constitute full compliance with the requirements of Clause 6.12(b): "*1) for the individual Panel members to develop a short list exclusively from the applications of replacement and substitute teachers, 2) for the whole Panel to review and assess only replacement and substitute teacher applications, 3) for the Panel to conduct any interviews determined necessary only among that group of replacement or substitute teachers, and 4) for the Panel to determine how many acceptable applicants there are among that group ... Only upon completion of that exercise undertaken exclusively for replacement and/or substitute teachers with the Board would the Panel be entitled to undertake a similar exercise for outside applicants. Ultimately the only point at which both sets of applications would be considered together would be in the Board's final determination of the best candidate for the position.*

In applying this reasoning to the facts of the case, the Arbitrator held that Clause 6.12(b) was violated by the school board because at least one member of the hiring panel had considered replacement and substitute teachers together with outside applicants. Despite the fact that the senior board management representative on the panel had determined that none of the internal applicants had the required qualifications, the process had been tainted and "*that taint was automatically introduced into the Panel's deliberations. ... I find that the School Board Panel's decision on [the grievor's] application was subject to a reasonable apprehension of taint. For that reason, their decision was invalid.*" Because of the reasonable apprehension of taint in the consideration process, the Arbitrator ruled it would be inappropriate to refer the matter back to the school board for a fair consideration of the grievor's application. Therefore, it was held that the Arbitration Board would make that determination and the Board decided that the grievor's previous teaching and in-service experience were not sufficient to "*establish reasonably equivalent qualification at the currently modern standard of proficiency that would be required for a person to teach ... in the disputed position ... A finding that [the grievor] did not meet the currently modern standards ... which were legitimately required for the position in dispute, fully addresses the violation of Article 6.12(b) that has occurred.*"

While the arbitration decision did uphold the teacher's grievance by finding that the Collective Agreement had been violated, the interpretation given to Clause 6.12(b) does not go so far as to require school boards to give preference in hiring to replacement and/or substitute teachers. Applicants from this group must be given full and fair consideration for vacant teaching positions before any information about applicants who are new to the board can enter into the deliberations. A school board's process for choosing the best candidate for any given teaching position must meet this requirement and be based upon a good faith assessment of competence, suitability and qualifications. Should any teacher feel that their rights under the Collective Agreement have been violated in this or any other respect, please contact an Administrative Officer of the NLTA Benefits and Economic Services Division for assistance and advice.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Redundancy, Reassignment & Layoff

by PERRY DOWNEY

The last day for teachers to be notified of layoff is May 7 and teachers are reminded to review Article 9: Layoff in the Provincial Collective Agreement (Article 47 in the Labrador West Collective Agreement). This Article clearly outlines the process that each school district is required to follow as they prepare and finalize their staffing plans for the 2005-06 school year.

During the March 2004 Budget Speech, the Provincial Government announced a reduction of 256 teaching units for the 2004-05 school year and a further reduction of 109 units effective September, 2005. The reduction of 109 units are the additional units that were held in "hold-back" from previous years and does not reflect any reduction that might occur due to decline in student population. Any further reductions in teacher allocations will have a major impact on programs and staffing. As a result, individual teachers may be affected by this process and thus declared redundant and reassigned to another position within another school within the district or laid off if no comparable position is available in the district that the person is capable of filling.

Because this process can have significant implications to individual teachers, it is very important that all teachers become familiar with the redundancy/reassignment and lay-off process and with their rights as provided in either the Provincial Collective Agreement or the Labrador West Collective Agreement. To briefly review the process that should occur when a position(s) is/are lost, i.e., a position(s) is/are redundant, all teachers should be familiar with the following:

Step I – Clause 9.01 (1.01 (h) – Labrador West): Teachers must ensure that their placement on the School Board's seniority list accurately reflects their entire teaching service in the Kindergarten to Level III public school system in the province, i.e., every day should be recorded as seniority. Time taught outside the province or outside of the Kindergarten to Level III school system cannot be credited as seniority. If there are discrepancies between your calculation of seniority and the School Board records, it is the teacher's responsibility to notify their School Board official as soon as it is discovered.

Step II – Clause 9.02 (47.02 – Labrador West): Senior teachers shall be reassigned to the remaining positions within the school that they are capable of filling. Subject to capability, the reassignment process shall be as follows: tenured teachers; teachers on a one-year probationary contract; teachers on a two-year probationary contract; teachers on probationary contracts in accordance with Clause 7.05.

Step III – Clause 9.03 (47.03 – Labrador West): A teacher who is not reassigned in accordance with Clause 9.02 (47.02 - Labrador West), shall have priority, based upon seniority, subject to capability, to vacant teaching positions or positions held by junior teachers, in the following order of priority: within the community; the nearest community, within the school district, where such a position exists.

Note: With respect to Clauses 9.02 and 9.03 (47.02 and 47.03 – Labrador West), in determining capability to fulfill the requirements of the job function, the School Board shall consider the overall ability of the teacher to perform the functions of the position in accordance with the currently modern standards required for the position.

Step IV: Any teacher who is declared redundant and not reassigned, in accordance with Clauses 9.02 and/or 9.03 (47.02 and 47.03 – Labrador West), is deemed to have been "laid off" and thus placed on recall. Any teacher placed on recall has rights to vacant comparable positions during the subsequent three (3) years following the layoff (Clause 9.10) (47.11 – Labrador West).

To paraphrase Clause 9.07(b) (47.06 – Labrador West), a teacher who is reassigned and notified in writing in accordance with Article 9 (Article 47 — Labrador West), has ten (10) calendar days to notify the School Board of his/her acceptance or rejection of the reassignment. Also, as stated in Clause 9.09

(47.05 – Labrador West): "A School Board will not advertise any positions or hire any teachers until it has made every effort to place those teachers who have been laid off or who have been notified in writing that they are to be laid off."

Any teacher who has been notified by his/her school administrator and/or school district office personnel that their position is redundant and they will be reassigned or laid off for the following school year should consult with the designated Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division responsible for that district. The school district designations for each Administrative Officer are as follows:

District 1	**Labrador**	Perry Downey	ext. 226
District 2	**Western**	Perry Downey	ext. 226
District 3	**Nova Central**	Stefanie Tuff	ext. 232
District 4	**Eastern:**		
	Teachers under the Marystown Regional Office	Lloyd Hobbs	ext. 230
	Teachers under the Spaniard's Bay Office	Lloyd Hobbs	ext. 230
	Teachers under the St. John's Central Office	Don Ash	ext. 231
	Teachers Under the Clarenville Regional Office	Don Ash	ext. 231
District 5	**Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador**	Stefanie Tuff	ext. 232
Dept. of Education Schools	**Newfoundland School for the Deaf Newfoundland & Labrador Youth Centre**	Don Ash	ext. 231

Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

CONTACT 2005

Theme:
Great Teaching:
A Question of Balance

August 14-17, 2005

University of Prince Edward Island

Keynote (Opening Sunday Night):

Dr. Gerry Hopkirk/Mr. Rod Campbell

Find Joy in Teaching

Plenary Sessions (Monday):

Mr. Rod Campbell

Teachers as Collaborative Leaders

Dr. Gerry Hopkirk

Teachers as Leaders of Educational Change

Concurrent Sessions:

- Cooperative Discipline: Treating Students with Dignity in Difficult Situations
- Differentiated Instruction
- Grading and Reporting
- Lights/Camera/Action
- Structured Conversations
- Successful Intelligences
- Taking Care of You
- Teaching in a Minority Language Setting *(en francais)*

CONTACT is sponsored by the teacher organizations of the Atlantic Region.

GUIDELINES FOR CONTACT 2005

1. Initial submission of names of delegates to CONTACT shall be the responsibility of the **NLTA Branch**. In addition to applications submitted by teachers to the Branch, nominations may be made at a Branch meeting.

2. a) Applications/nominations from Branches shall be completed **on or before May 13th** and submitted to the NLTA for final approval as per guidelines in number 5.
   b) Final approval of nominees for CONTACT shall occur at the Professional Issues in Teaching Committee's May meeting.

3. Where Branches do not submit nominations on time, the Branch may forfeit any right to have a representative at CONTACT. Decisions of the Professional Issues in Teaching Committee shall be final.

4. A Branch is permitted to send up to three (3) nominees which shall be prioritized according to preference of delegate(s) to attend. Branches are asked to consider the following when prioritizing their nominees:
   a) Branch nominees who have not already attended a CONTACT Conference.
   b) Nominees that have been prioritized in previous years but have not attended.
   c) Nominees for which the Conference will have the most relevance.

5. The Professional Issues in Teaching Committee shall act as the Selection Committee for representatives to CONTACT and shall be governed by the following guidelines:
   a) Teachers as prioritized by the Branches shall be the teachers selected for CONTACT.
   b) Branches which have not had a member attend a CONTACT Conference shall be given first priority.
   c) Priority for Branches which already have had representation at CONTACT shall be based on the time lapse since previous attendance.

6. Teachers shall be notified of acceptance as soon as possible following the selection of representatives by the **Professional Issues in Teaching Committee.**

7. a) Representatives, where possible, shall be informed of the expenses of CONTACT, how much NLTA will provide and how much will be the individual teacher's responsibility.
   b) Transportation costs shall be based on the cheapest mode of transportation possible.
   c) Selected delegates to CONTACT must submit a non-refundable $25.00 deposit towards their registration. This will be submitted to the NLTA CONTACT Registrar within two weeks of notification of selection.

CONTACT APPLICATION FORM

TEACHERS MUST FORWARD APPLICATIONS TO THEIR BRANCH BY MAY 6, 2005
FOR SUBMISSION TO CONTACT SELECTION COMMITTEE.
APPLICATIONS THAT ARE NOT SUBMITTED THROUGH THEIR BRANCH WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Branch

Name of Teacher

School Address

Postal Code

School Telephone Email:

Home Address

Postal Code

Home Telephone

Have you attended CONTACT before? ❑ No ❑ Yes Year

Description:
(qualifications, experience, interests and NLTA involvement)

Date

Signature of Branch President

BRANCHES MUST FORWARD NOMINEES TO NLTA OFFICE
NO LATER THAN MAY 13, 2005.

Return this form by fax or mail to:
Beverley Park, Administrative Officer, Professional Development
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Fax: 726-4302 or 1-877-711-6582 (toll-free)

Sick Leave

by LLOYD HOBBS

The issue of sick leave is addressed in Article 15 of the Collective Agreement (Article 27 in Labrador West Collective Agreement). It outlines how one accumulates this benefit and when and how one can access it.

Clause 15.02 (Clause 27.02 – Labrador West) identifies 195 to be the maximum number of paid sick days one can accumulate and this is reached after 9 years of service. (Should a teacher suffer a major illness requiring him/her to exhaust his/her sick leave, he/she can rebuild that back to 195 days over a five-year period, as outlined in Clause 15.03 [27.03 – Labrador West].) To calculate the precise number of sick days available, one must deduct from their eligible total, the number of sick days used in the previous four years. In any event, a teacher shall be entitled to a minimum of 18 days sick leave at the start of any school year.

Clause 15.12 (27.12 – Labrador West) provides an opportunity for teachers to borrow up to 15 days from a subsequent year's accumulation of sick leave should teachers exhaust their sick leave bank of days during the year.

Clause 15.04 (Clause 27.04 – Labrador West) describes when sick leave with pay will be awarded to a teacher. If a teacher is absent for illness in excess of four consecutive days or seven teaching days in the aggregate in any school year, a sick note from a doctor must be provided or paid leave will not occur. In cases where the Board is satisfied that a doctor's note is not possible, a registered nurse, Chairperson of the School District, a magistrate or other person designated by the Board, may issue a note. While this Article allows up to four consecutive days of sick leave and seven in the aggregate without a note, any time the employer can demonstrate a valid reason to question any use of sick leave, a note can be required. **However, if you have been absent for seven (7) days with a doctor's note, you can still access the four (4) consecutive days or seven (7) in the aggregate without a doctor's note.**

According to Clause 15.09 (Clause 27.09 – Labrador West): *When a teacher is absent on sick leave and on that day the school is closed because of weather, or other such reasons, and the teachers are not required to be in attendance, such day or days shall not be deducted from the teacher's accumulated sick leave.*

This means that you will not have days deducted from your sick leave total, whether you are on short or long term sick leave, when your school is closed due to weather or other such reasons. As an aside, it is worth noting that the substitute who was contracted for that teacher would continue to receive pay for that day, for Clause 49.04(a) (Clause 47.04(a) Labrador West) states: *For salary purposes, substitute teachers shall be deemed to have kept school on any day or part thereof where: (a) the school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Schools Act, 1997; or…*

Section 32 of the Schools Act includes such things as weather.

In terms of the larger issue of substitutes and sick leave, it is worth noting that Clause 49.06(b) (Clause 47.06(b) – Labrador West) addresses this issue. Basically, once a substitute teacher has accumulated 50 days of substitute teaching within a school year, that teacher is entitled to sick leave, retroactive to the start of that school year provided the illness occurred after the teacher commenced employment during a contract period. Payment of the sick leave benefit will not extend beyond the termination date of the contract period. Therefore, substitutes should keep a record of all sick days and obtain medical documentation as much as possible. As well, Clause 49.08 (Clause 47.08 – Labrador West) states: *Substitute teachers who substitute for 20 teaching days or more on a continuous basis will be considered a replacement teacher for purposes of benefits under this Agreement, with effect from the first day of such period of substitution.*

Thus, once substitute teachers become replacement teachers, they may avail of their sick leave benefits during the term of that contract as would any permanent teacher.

For any teacher wishing clarification of matters dealing with sick leave benefits, the answers can be found in Article 15 of the Collective Agreement (Article 27 – Labrador West). Substitute teachers must also refer to Article 49 (Article 47 – Labrador West). If you do not have a copy of the Agreement, it is available electronically on the NLTA web site at www.nlta.nl.ca. Go to "Publications" and scroll down to "Provincial Collective Agreement" (or Labrador West Agreement) and then the appropriate clause. Questions can also be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599.

Lloyd Hobbs is Assistant Executive Director of the NLTA.

Teacher Salaries
A Cross-Canada Comparison

The following is a comparison of teacher salaries at the highest pay category in teacher salary scales across Canada as of September 1, 2004. The figures are the most current available and were provided to the NLTA by the Canadian Teachers' Federation. A more detailed comparison of major teacher salary scales in Canada is regularly carried out by CTF and is published in its *Economic and Member Services Notes*.

Salary information contained below is based on province-wide salary scales for the four Atlantic provinces, Quebec and Saskatchewan, while Territorial agreements are shown for the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. For the remaining four provinces, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia, local collective agreements are in effect and a sample of salary scales from some of the largest urban centres is included.

Province/ Territory	Agreement	Salary Category	Minimum	Maximum	Steps	Avg. Increment Min. to Max.	
						($)	(%)
NL	Provincial*	VII	$51,206	$68,117	10	$1,879	3.2%
PE	Provincial	CVI	$41,425	$60,850	10	$2,158	4.4%
NS[1]	Provincial	TC7	$44,168	$67,978	11	$2,381	4.4%
NB	Provincial*	CVI	$40,482	$62,292	11	$2,181	4.4%
QC[1,2]	Provincial*	III[3]	$42,143	63,527	15	$1,527	3.0%
ON	***Elementary:***						
	Ottawa-Carleton*[4]	A4	$42,691	$76,008	12	$3,141	5.4%
	Toronto*	A4	$44,491	$76,055	11	$3,156	5.5%
	Secondary:						
	Ottawa-Carleton*	A4	$44,471	$76,008	11	$3,154	5.5%
	Elementary-Secondary:						
	London Catholic*	A4	$39,988	$73,502	11	$3,351	6.3%
MB	Winnipeg[4]	6	$45,267	$69,234	10	$2,663	4.8%
SK	Provincial*	VI	$43,570	$66,103	10	$2,504	4.7%
AB	Calgary Public	F	$49,828	$75,956	11	$2,613	4.3%
	Edmonton Public	**6**	**$49,588**	**$75,321**	**11**	**$2,573**	**4.3%**
BC	Vancouver*	6M	$46,917	$70,397	11	$2,348	4.1%
YT	Territorial	VI	$55,319	$79,466	11	$2,415	3.7%
NT	G.N.W.T.*	6	$61,007	$87,171	12	$2,379	3.3%
NU	Territorial	6	$60,717	$86,756	12	$2,367	3.3%

* Currently in negotiations. Salaries shown are those in effect at the end of an agreement that expired prior to September 1, 2004.

[1] The highest pay category (TC8) for Nova Scotia which requires a doctoral degree, is excluded from the table above given that most provinces do not have a similar category. As well, Category VII for Winnipeg, a salary category with a relatively small share of teachers, was also excluded.

[2] Salaries reflect pay equity adjustments. Effective September 1, 2003, Salary Categories ≤ 17 years, 18 years and 19 years became Scales I, II and III respectively. As of September 1, 2005, a 'single salary structure will be in effect.' Note that teachers with 20 years of schooling (former Category 20) are not covered in the table above and continue to be paid based on salaries in effect April 1, 2003 until the collective agreement, which expired on June 30, 2003, is renewed.

[3] Applies to teachers hired after May 1, 2001.

[4] Applies to teachers outside Yellowknife. Teachers in the Yellowknife Public and Catholic School Districts each have separate salary scales.

Thinking About Retirement?

by DON ASH

Under the Teachers' Pension Act, a teacher is eligible for pension benefit:
(a) At age 60 with between five and 24 years of pensionable service.
(b) At age 55 or after with at least 25 years of pensionable service.
(c) After completing 30 years of worked service* regardless of age.
(d) Reduced pension with 29 years of worked service and at least 30 years of pensionable service. Pension will be reduced based on the number of months a teacher will be retired prior to reaching age 55.
(*Worked service refers to all pensionable service except university study buy-back that could be purchased prior to 1991.)

VTC Access to Pension Estimator

Teachers now have access to a pension estimator through the Virtual Teacher Centre (VTC) at www.virtualteachercentre.ca. Teachers can register online and using their pension benefit statement input their salary information to obtain an estimate of their expected pension at the chosen point of retirement.

Checklist for Retiring Teachers

The following checklist is designed to assist teachers as they participate and plan for this upcoming life phase change.

- Apply to NLTA to attend a pre-retirement seminar up to two years prior to your year of retirement.
- Confirm the eligible date of your retirement with the Pensions Division at the pre-retirement seminar or by contacting Pensions Division.
- Submit your resignation to School District (**do not** resign until eligibility has been confirmed): one month notice is required if retirement is to occur before Christmas; three months notice (March 31) is required if retirement is to occur after Christmas.
- Apply for teachers' pension by completing the appropriate *Teachers' Pension Application*.
- Complete the *Direct Deposit Form* and submit to Pensions Division.
- Apply for severance pay by completing the *Severance Payment Request Form*.
- Confirm/consult with Johnson Incorporated on Group Insurance coverage (Tel: 1-800-563-1528).
- Consider joining the Retired Teachers' Association by completing the application form and submitting it to the Pensions Division.
- Consider seeking personal financial advice regarding financial decisions related to retirement.
- Keep your mind active and your body healthy. Enjoy life!

Changes Effective Upon Retirement

- NLTA Membership status changes from Active Membership to Life or Associate Membership.
- Access to the services and benefits of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) terminates.
- Basic Life Insurance coverage reduces to twice annual pension from twice annual salary (provided coverage is maintained and premiums paid), terminates at age 65, and is replaced by a members only $15,000 benefit after age 65.
- Eligibility for EI ceases (unless a person becomes a "re-established worker" or is on a forced medical retirement).

Any questions or comments can be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Don Ash is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Some Good News Regarding Group Insurance – *Finally!!!*

by DON ASH

NLTA Group Insurance Trustees have completed their renewal decisions for the deduction period from April 1, 2005 - March 31, 2006. Every insured member of the NLTA Group Insurance Plan should have received a memorandum in March from Bill Chaisson, Chairperson of Group Insurance Trustees. The purpose of this article is to highlight these decisions, and ensure that NLTA insured members are kept current regarding our group insurance program.

- No change occurred in the premium rates for Options A1 – Basic Life and Dependent Life, A3 – Basic Accidental Death and Dismemberment, A4 – Voluntary Accidental Death and Dismemberment, B – Health Insurance, and C – Long-Term Disability Insurance.
- Effective the first payroll cheque in April, premiums were increased in A2/A5 – Voluntary Life Insurance at varying amounts depending on age.
- Effective May 1, 2005, dental claims will be paid based on the 2003 Newfoundland and Labrador Suggested Dental Fee Guide rather than the 2002 Fee Guide. B2 – Dental premiums were increased by 4.4% mainly to pay for this upgrade.
- The premium rate for the $15,000 Post 65 Retiree Life Insurance was decreased.
- Deficits in the Basic Life Insurance plan were paid from the Group Insurance Trust Fund.
- A Long Term Care Plan Option was made available to members by application in September 2004.

Despite the welcome reprieve from escalating premiums, your NLTA Group Insurance Trustees continue to face significant challenges.

Basic Life Plan

A larger than projected number of teacher deaths occurred last year resulting in a plan deficit in excess of $300,000 for 2003-04. The number of teacher deaths and resulting claims to date during 2004-05 continue to exceed projections, and a significant deficit is projected for this period. While Trustees have maintained current premiums for the renewal for 2005-06, premium increases will be required in future years should claims continue to rise and deficits continue to occur.

Health Insurance Plan

NLTA Health claims seemed to reach a plateau last year, resulting in a surplus in the health plan which will be returned to the NLTA Trust Fund (and the plan). However, industry experts continue to predict double digit increases in health care costs and specifically, prescription drugs. Trustees will continue to monitor claims with the continued goal of meeting teachers' desire for good health insurance coverage at a reasonable premium.

On the benefit side, NLTA members have been seeking improvements to paramedical coverage (psychologist, physiotherapist, etc.), vision care improvements and inclusion of fertility drugs. Government agreement is required under the collective agreement for any plan changes, and such agreement has not been forthcoming.

Long Term Disability (LTD)

The LTD plan is currently experiencing positive financial experience as a result of a relative reduction in the number of claims and negotiations on reserves and expenses with the underwriter. Despite the potential for volatility in claims, Trustees are attempting to achieve premium rate stability for teachers in this plan.

Dental Plan

Claims costs, and consequently premiums, have been relatively controlled by allowing the basis for payment of claims – the suggested Dental Fee Guide – to lag two years behind the current Fee Guide. If dentists charge according to the current fee guide (2005), then teachers will not receive the full 80% reimbursement. Trustees suggest that teachers remind their dentist that our plan only pays claims based on the 2003 Fee Guide (effective May 1) and ask that their dentist consider charging accordingly.

Trustees continue to face the challenges of a volatile and changing group insurance business and will continue to make decisions in the best interests of the NLTA plan member as a whole. Let us hope that the relative stability of 2004-05 continues in 2005-06. We can all do our part by living healthy and taking care of ourselves.

Taking Stock

by BEVERLEY PARK

"...it would be great to get recognition from the principal, fellow teachers, parents or students, but it is also really important to take a look in the mirror once in a while and grin a big grin at the person looking back and give a wink of *we did it!*"

For the past few months you have been caught up in the intensity of student evaluation – that phase in the school year when the students attempt to cram everything they have learned onto two or three pages of paper in response to your attempts to cram every valid question on a single test. So, in this article, while you're still in evaluation mode, I want to stick with the topic but change the focus from student evaluation to teacher evaluation.

WAIT! Don't stop reading! This is not a test. You will not be graded, at least not by anyone else. This is an "open book" concept... or more appropriately an "open mind" concept. You are the one doing the evaluating.

Think about each of these questions. Take a few minutes to really recall specific situations in relation to your responses. After, you may want to read the commentary which follows.

1. How often do I *laugh* with my students?
2. How often do I *take work home*?
3. Do I think of myself *only* as a teacher?
4. Do I think of myself as *only* a teacher?
5. Do I see my students as *people*, not only as students?
6. Do I plan to make my classes *interesting* as well as *instructional*?
7. Am I clear about what I *expect*; about what I am *teaching*?
8. When was the last time I gave *myself* a pat on the back? What for?
9. When was the last time I *chastised myself*? What for?
10. What have I done lately to *recharge my batteries*?

Take a look at questions 1,4,5,6, and 7. The National Association of Secondary School Principals published the results of a survey in which students ranked the characteristics of Best Teachers. After you read the student rankings it may become clear why I asked the questions I did.

Characteristics of Best Teachers
(From *The Mood of American Youth*, 1996)
In rank order, the best teachers...
1. Have a sense of humour.
2. Make the class interesting.
3. Have knowledge of their subjects.
4. Explain things clearly.
5. Spend time to help students.
6. Are fair to their students.
7. Treat students like adults. (Remember, this survey was done by high school students.)
8. Relate well to students.
9. Are considerate of students' feelings.
10. Don't show favouritism toward students.
11. Give interesting assignments.

Regarding questions 2 and 10, here's my best advice. If you answered that you take work home ***every*** night, and you had trouble remembering doing anything to recharge your batteries, you are certainly working too hard. We know that teaching is time consuming. The recent study by Dr. David Dibbon, *It's About Time*, (see Ed Hancock's article on page 10 of this issue and in the January issue of *The Bulletin*) documented the many demands on teachers and the hours and hours that you devote to your profession – but it cannot be all consuming. You need to realize that time and effort can be counterproductive if you are overtired, overtaxed, overworked. Take at least one night off somewhere in the middle of the week and take at least one totally free day on the weekend – Saturday or Sunday. While you may think that this is unrealistic advice from someone who is not in the classroom every day, you'll likely find that you'll get just as much done – and you'll feel better too.

Questions 3 and 4 may have fooled you. The first question was meant to help you reflect on the fact

that you can become one-dimensional if you let your work become what you are and who you are. Yes, you are a teacher, but you are not *only* a teacher. You are somebody's son or daughter; somebody's friend; maybe somebody's partner; or somebody's mom or dad. You are also the person who has an identity beyond your role as a teacher.

The second question is one of professional esteem. Do you think of being a teacher as a noble profession, one in which you take pride; or do you see yourself as *only a teacher*, i.e., not a doctor or a lawyer, a mere teacher? Whether you realize it or not, the work you do is very important. Cliches do not become cliches unless they bear an element of truth, so here is one for you to remember: *To teach is to touch a life*. Be gentle with those you touch; be gentle with yourself.

Finally, with reference to questions 8 and 9, it would not surprise me if you had a lot more difficulty remembering a time when you gave yourself credit for something than it did to come up with an example of when you were hard on yourself! In fact, I specifically followed up with "what for?" in the case of a pat on the back because it is important for you to realize the need to give yourself credit when you do things well. Of course it would be great to get recognition from the principal, fellow teachers, parents or students, but it is also really important to take a look in the mirror once in a while and grin a big grin at the person looking back and give a wink of "we did it!". What's that phrase about not being able to receive love until we love ourselves? Perhaps the same could be said for professional esteem. We have to see ourselves as deserving...and then we will be. The education profession as a whole is notoriously bad at giving credit for the wonderful work that we do. Self-fulfilling prophecies are always so much nicer when they are positive!

Beverley Park is an Administrative Officer with the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

Special Interest Councils

The Core of Professional Unionism

by RENE WICKS

If you're reading this you may have been intrigued by the term "professional unionism". I know I was the first time I saw it. I knew that such a term had surfaced quite a bit in recent years and my first response was to wonder if its emergence meant that there is or was such a thing as "unprofessional" unionism. That thought caused me to recall that old Strawbs hit, *Part of the Union*, with its politically incorrect lyrics. If you're vintage, like me, feel free to sing along:

Now I'm a union man,
Amazed at what I am,
I say what I thinks, that the company stinks
Yes I'm a union man.
Ohhh, you can't get me I'm a part of the union
You can't get me I'm a part of the union
You can't get me I'm a part of the union
Till the day I die, 'till the day I die.

Truth is, the old Strawbs hit was a decent reflection of the traditional unions that grew out of necessity during the late Industrial Revolution and crystalized during the Great Depression. Often referred to as "industrial unionism" the focus was to overcome horrendous working conditions, to secure basic and humane rights for workers.

Now, about a century later, we have "professional unionism", a concept which redefines the nature of what unions should be and makes a deliberate departure from the old-style "industrial" unionism. So what are some characteristics of professional unionism? And, while we're at it, let's see how NLTA shapes up in that category.

- Professional unions blur the lines between labor and management. Our Association includes teachers and administrators who operate in a collegial model.
- In a professional union participatory decision-making and shared leadership are key. NLTA provides many avenues for involvement – branches, committees, special interest councils, Executive and Joint Council. We're doing great so far!
- In professional teacher unions, according to Kerchner, Koppich, and Weeres (*United Mind Workers: Unions and Teaching in the Knowledge Society*, 1997), "contracts are structured around what is educationally sound for students, not around traditional zones of control or what is comfortable for adults." This is the most challenging aspect for professional unions, since decent wages and reasonable workload will always be high on the hierarchy of needs. Yet, if you look not only at our Collective Agreement, but our policies and position papers, the underlying premise is about student learning.

So, in 1890, when this Association was founded, Frederick Bancroft was on the right track. The mission was two-fold: "the personal well-being and professional excellence of teachers". As the Association evolved the imperatives of industrial unionism were necessarily retained and championed by the Benefits and Economic Services Division, while professional unionism, although pervasive, was most visible through the Professional Development arm of the NLTA. Let's think about those two words – visible and pervasive. If a professional union is characterized by opportunities for leadership and involvement, collegial sharing of professional expertise, and a focus on professional growth, then the most apparent and widespread manifestations are the activities of our Special Interest Councils.

For almost 40 years, the Special Interest Councils (SICs) of the NLTA have been a fundamental component of professional development programming. Like Branches, the Councils are designed to encourage widespread grassroots leadership and participation in the Association. For the thousands of teachers whose interests and passions lie in the professional development arm of the NLTA, the SICs are the duly constituted bodies which provide opportunities for members to be elected to Executive positions, to attend BGMs and to provide relevant professional development to colleagues throughout the province. Historically our SICs have maintained a very significant profile in providing professional development opportunities for teachers. Not only have our Councils hosted hundreds of successful conferences, they have played a key role in curriculum development and implementation; and

in advising Executive Council on the position the Association should take on many professional issues.

In short, SICs provide valuable services to thousands of teachers. They have demonstrated that professional development is not only the responsibility of the employer, an outdated "industrial union" view, but is most relevant and diverse when there is grassroots genesis.

Since the 1990s, with a dramatic decline in the availability of substitute teacher time for professional development, the SICs have experienced significant challenges. It has become increasingly difficult for teachers to obtain the necessary leave to attend SIC conferences and, as a result, active membership in many Councils has declined and the number of Councils has gone from a peak of 37 to the current 19. Without doubt, it is time to regroup. If we are to continue to offer our members opportunities for professional involvement and leadership within the NLTA a new model must focus on greater collaboration with school districts and the Department of Education. The professional needs of teachers are diverse and encompass much more than "inservicing of new programs". Providing a wide range of options for professional growth is the shared responsibility of all educational organizations, including the NLTA. For this Association it is the obligation of professional unionism.

To meet this challenge we are currently restructuring our Special Interest Councils. In June 2004, Provincial Executive passed a motion to create three levels-based councils – primary/elementary, intermediate, and senior high, while allowing for the continued existence of certain specialized councils. Clearly there are many logistics to be worked out on such issues as membership, funding, and programming. The committee responsible for the restructuring will consult with current councils and maintain communication with all members. It's about collaboration and improvement, it's about professional unionism, and at the end of the day, it's about providing expanded opportunities for teachers to become involved in their Association.

We are once again in a time where major restructuring is taking place in the education system of this province. Although this presents considerable challenge and much uncertainty, it should be recognized as an opportunity for the NLTA to be visionary in restructuring our Special Interest Councils, thereby maintaining an important arm of the Association that remains relevant and self-sustaining.

Rene Wicks is an Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

Overcoming Obstacles… to a Healthy Workplace!

by CLAUDETTE E. S. COOMBS

What prevents a workplace from being healthy? The physical factors of air quality, space, lighting and electrical or barrier hazards are well known obstacles to building a healthy workplace. Although difficult to remediate, solutions can eventually be implemented. It's often the other sources of ill health, including interpersonal interactions, which may appear much more sinister and difficult to address!

Relationships – Conflict among teachers, between support staff and teachers, or between teachers and administrators is often a source of distress. If left unresolved, conflict can have serious implications for the functioning of the school and the health of individuals involved. Unfortunately, conflict tends to contaminate an environment. The atmosphere becomes negative, unity is dissolved and any chance of harmony is lost. This is definitely not the space in which anyone would choose to work!

Bullying – If you thought bullying was a school issue only relating to students, then you might be enlightened to learn that it occurs all too frequently in the staff room as well. This corrupt relationship exists where there is a misuse of the imbalance in power or authority. Children on the playground use language, size or group unity to threaten isolation, physical harm or social rejection. The natural power imbalance which occurs between the administration and staff at any school creates an environment where misuse of authority can prevail. In the school hierarchy a position of authority, inside knowledge or personal connections can be used to threaten undesirable consequences or control behaviour. Colleagues also use loud or intimidating behaviour, threat of "making a scene" or physical presence and traits to manipulate others. The inexperienced, untenured or accommodating teachers are most often the targets.

Sarcasm – People bring their own hurts to the workplace and instead of dealing with them in a healthy manner, may project feeling through hurtful communication patterns. The use of sarcasm is an accepted mode of interaction in some staff rooms, yet poses risks to those engaging in, or subjected to, this unhealthy behaviour.

It is no surprise that Respectful Workplace Programs are appearing throughout the corporate world. A workplace that does not show concern for its employees suffers in productivity, staff turnover and work absenteeism. However, the fall out from an emotionally unhealthy workplace can also be the tragedy we hear about in the news!

How can an unhealthy workplace be transformed?
Several steps must be in place to successfully change the health of a workplace. The first is awareness at all levels. Employers and employees must recognize the symptoms and must see the negative impact. A next step is the belief that change is possible and despite growing pains, making the effort would be worth it. All must believe that a different situation would be better for themselves. If we have become entrenched in a system of acting and reacting, this is seen as a norm and creating change may not be considered. We are sometimes so busy struggling to survive that we don't have the resources to challenge the existing status. Or, we may have faced too many unsuccessful challenges and have become disillusioned. However, once we believe that constructive change is possible, to make it a reality we develop a workable action plan. Set a goal with specific objectives which serve as progress indicators. Define how the objectives will be fulfilled, i.e., "who does what with specified resources by a set time". Clearly stated, goals and objectives are easier to achieve. The action plan should include a component on policy and procedures, skills development and progress evaluation. The action plan should provide a working structure yet have enough flexibility to allow revision.

Although school districts may establish some rules and guidelines which take into account teacher life balance and issues, the school has a great deal of autonomy in developing its own supportive culture.

The policy and procedures component should develop and supply supportive Policies, Programs, and Practices, including a protocol for dealing with conflict and issues of concern. A Policy Manual should be accessible to all staff and should cover any anticipated school issue. When gaps are identified, staff should be involved in developing appropriate protocol. Ensuring that all staff know school expectations and the consequences of non-compliance will prevent needless dissension over the consistent enforcement of school policies. When reflecting on how teachers are expected to interact with each other, the NLTA Code of Ethics is a good place to look.

The skills development component should emphasize a variety of areas. These include: understanding appropriate communication behaviours (listening, assertiveness, impact of body language, saying No); improving organizational abilities in time and resource management (set priorities, eliminate wastage, decrease interruptions, schedule); refining conflict resolution techniques; and promoting team building.

The action plan should be designed to allow for reviewing progress and modifying the initial plan to incorporate revisions which would better serve the school and its staff. This review component could include the appropriate use of the School Development Committee to oversee the implementation and monitoring of a healthy workplace plan. It could devise indicators to measure aspects including: physical structure, organizational protocol, staff development and flexibility, safety and respect. Student health is also a school factor and issues such as nutrition, activity, safety and tolerance may be combined with the overall workplace plan.

Encouraging a Healthy Workforce

This is the role of all individuals at the worksite. Adopting a positive, supportive attitude goes a long way in promoting a healthy working environment. A common staff complaint is the feeling of not being appreciated, valued or respected by colleagues or by administrators. To correct this perception, teachers need to see action, not just hear the words, although words of encouragement should be given at every reasonable opportunity. Value can be shown by encouraging input at staff meetings, in school development, on participation for "voluntary" activities such as committees and extra curricular and by having influence in decision making so that personal experience is heard and considered.

Teachers comment that even when a situation cannot immediately be changed, difficult days, limited resources or cramped space can be handled if they know that there is hope of a change (even if it is next year) and if their administrators show an empathetic attitude. On the contrary, when administrators express an attitude of "learn to live with it", the result on staff is frustration, increased resentment and anger, increased sick leave use and decreased functioning and overall productivity. It is obvious that much can be achieved through the interest and strength of a supportive administrator.

We know that we respond differently to students who are resourceful, considerate and diligent compared to those who are obstinate, abrasive and irresponsible. Equally so, we invite a different reaction to ourselves, depending on how we behave and are perceived. Daily we make choices which affect our health. We can create a healthy workplace by choosing to be proactive in initiating positive change.

...knowing a problem exists and doing nothing about it, is not an acceptable pathway to a healthy workplace.

Claudette Coombs is a Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 242) or Marie Wall (ext. 265).

School Milk Foundation

Students "Picnic and Play" and "Reach for Rainbows"

by BETH PAYNE

"Picnic and Play the Milky Way" and "Reach for the Rainbow" are two initiatives of the School Milk Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador. These in-class presentations complement primary and elementary teachers' work in nutrition education. Currently, School Milk has four Regional Nutrition Representatives criss-crossing the island visiting individual classrooms with fun, interactive presentations. Both the "Picnic and Play the Milky Way" and "Reach for the Rainbow" presentations have been developed with close attention to the Department of Education's health and nutrition curriculum outcomes in order to be effective in assisting the efforts of classroom teachers with this subject material.

A peek into a classroom, where activities are being led by a School Milk Foundation Nutrition Representative, will reveal enthusiastic involvement by students and teachers alike. The "Picnic and Play the Milky Way" presentation is aimed at students from Kindergarten to Grade 2. Students are seated on the floor around a picnic blanket with a wicker picnic basket, realistic food models and colorful placements representing the colors of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. By the end of the session, the children have echoed a poem, have shared information about healthy foods and why they are important, and have correctly sorted foods by group. The "Picnic and Play the Milky Way" presentation ends with students participating in an 'action' song that reinforces the healthy living message.

The "Reach for the Rainbow" presentation for Grades 3-6, involves students assisting in building *Canada's Food Guide for Healthy Eating* while learning appropriate key nutrient information about foods from all four food groups. Follow-up games are played to reinforce the concepts that have been covered. In all cases, students are enthusiastic and learn a lot during the short, organized, fun session. Teachers who have seen our presentations, view them as valuable learning tools for their students. They often comment that they, too, have learned something new.

Though the topic of nutrition is admittedly important, it is one that is confusing and fraught with conflicting information and misconceptions. The Department of Education, school districts, school counsels, administrators, staff, and parents struggle with the topic in an effort to best serve the children of the province. The School Milk Program helps through their healthy eating presentations and by offering both white and chocolate milk as nutritious choices at school. The School Milk Foundation, in consultation with other professionals in the nutrition field, promotes chocolate milk as a healthy dairy choice. Chocolate milk contains the same amount of calcium and other nutrients as white milk and has no more sugar than that of a same size serving of unsweetened orange juice. Presently, the School Milk Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador is proud to report that the average amount of milk being consumed by students in Newfoundland and Labrador, during the school day, is higher than in any other province in Canada.

During the month of March, nutrition was promoted through Education Week's "Food for Thought". As well, March is recognized nationally as Nutrition Month. For the past 14 years, the School Milk Foundation has been a prominent force in our province, promoting better choices for all. Through its efforts, milk has become more accessible to students during the school day at a price far below the current retail level. The School Milk Foundation recognizes that overall good nutrition is the key to good health, happiness and success of all children and adults. Consuming two to four servings of dairy products a day is now recognized as necessary for building and maintaining bone mass and also helping to control weight. With the increased level of obesity in both children and adults and the accompanying health implications of poor eating habits, it is important to recognize that health education needs to be emphasized year round.

The School Milk Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador challenges all adults, and particularly those in the school system who have a huge influence on shaping the future of the children served, to become champions in setting a higher bar for fitness and nutrition in each and every school in our province.

For further information on the "Picnic and Play the Milky Way" and "Reach for the Rainbow" in-class presentations, contact info@schoolmilkfdn.nf.net.

Beth Payne is the Executive Director of the School Milk Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, a non-profit organization that promotes milk and healthy living.

2004 Tax Treatment

Employment and Professional Expenses of Teachers

This article provides an update on deductions applicable for the 2004 tax year. See the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website for further information: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu-e.html.

1. Tuition Fees and Education Amount

Education Amount – Changed from 2003. Previously, you could **not** claim this amount if you received a salary or wages while studying in a program related to your job. Under proposed legislation, you **can** now claim this credit even if you received a salary or wages. This change applies to 2004 and later years *only*. This credit may be claimed for each month you were in full-time attendance at a post-secondary institution ($400/month) or in part-time studies ($120/month) lasting at least 3 consecutive weeks and involving a minimum of 12 hours of course work per week.

Tuition Fees – Unchanged from 2003. Tuition fees paid by you, in excess of a minimum of $100, qualify for a 16% federal credit. To qualify, the fees must be paid to a Canadian post-secondary institution or to an institution certified by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). Fees paid to universities outside Canada for full-time enrolment in degree programs also qualify.

2. Use of Your Own Vehicle

Unchanged from 2003. You may qualify to deduct certain automobile expenses if the following criteria are met: (1) you are ordinarily required to work away from your employer's place of business or to work in several places; (2) you are required to pay your own travelling expenses; (3) you do not receive a tax-free allowance per kilometre and; (4) a T2200 tax form "Declaration of Conditions of Employment" has been completed by your employer.

• ***Operating Costs*** include fuel and oil; car washes and maintenance; repairs; insurance; licence and registration fees; eligible interest you paid on a loan used to buy the motor vehicle; and eligible leasing costs to the extent they relate to your employment. Driving between home and work is considered personal except where you travel from home to a business call at the start of the workday or return home from a business call at the close of your workday.

• ***Capital Cost Allowance (depreciation)***. You are permitted to deduct capital cost allowance on the employment-related use of your car.

3. Cost of Supplies and Office at Home

If your contract of employment requires you to pay for any supplies used in your classroom or to maintain an office at your own expense, you may deduct some of the expenses involved (Tax Form T2200, "Declaration of Conditions of Employment", must be signed by your employer before filing).

Supplies – The *Income Tax Act* permits you to deduct the cost of certain supplies consumed directly in your teaching duties, provided your contract of employment requires you to supply and pay for these items. Unfortunately, supplies used by teachers are restricted to "stationery items (other than books), used by teachers". Equipment and material not consumed during the school year (e.g., computers and software) is specifically excluded.

Office at Home – If your contract of employment requires you to maintain an office at your own expense, you are permitted to deduct certain expenses provided either: (1) the office is where you primarily perform your duties of employment; or (2) the office is used exclusively to earn income from employment, and it is used for meeting clients on a regular and continuous basis in the course of performing your duties of employment. Very few teachers or other employed persons qualify for this deduction.

4. Convention Expenses

As a result of a legal challenge by two Alberta teachers last year, teachers are eligible to deduct the cost of going to a maximum of two conventions a year. The conventions have to: relate to your business or professional activity; and be held by a business or professional organization within the geographical limits of where the sponsor of the convention usually does business.

CRA officials indicate that deductions will be permitted in situations essentially identical to those in the Alberta case. Specifically, the ATA bylaws require its members to attend the annual Convention, which then constitutes a job requirement. The teachers are paid for the days but not reimbursed for travelling expenses they incurred. Thus, the travelling expenses may be deducted pursuant to the *Income Tax Act*.

CTF Economic and Member Services Notes, February 2005.

Principals Honoured for Contributions to Education

In February, leading principals selected from Canada-wide nominations were honourd for their exemplary contributions to education at The Learning Partnership's first annual Canada's Outstanding Principals™ Awards.

Susan Murray, Principal of Roncalli Elementary in St. John's, and Wayne Rodgers, Principal of Queen Elizabeth Regional High School in Foxtrap, were among 28 of the country's best principals to be recognized.

Ms. Murray was honored for creating a learning community in which students, teachers and families participate fully in the development of a safe and caring culture for learning. She facilitated leadership development seminars for the school district as part of the Provincial Leadership group, and contributed to a professional development module on School Culture for a national e-learning project, ELLnet (Educational Leadership Learning Network).

Susan Murray

Mr. Rodgers was honoured for successfully implementing Student Incentive Policy and K12Planet.com, resulting in improved home-school communications, higher student achievement, and a 47.6% decrease in absenteeism. He participated in projects and district initiatives such as Leadership at Work, Teacher Induction, Professional Growth and Appraisal, Teacher Professionalism, and ELLnet.

Wayne Rodgers

The Learning Partnership is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to bringing together business, education, government, labour, policy makers and the community to develop partnerships that strengthen public education in Canada.

The Learning Partnership and the Canadian Association of Principals and its affiliate organizations collaborated in this new partnership endeavour to recognize the unique and crucial contribution that principals of the public education system make to the community, and to ensuring quality public education for Canada's young people. Nominations were inviated from every province and territory and selection was on a representation by population basis.

A distinguished group of Canadian private sector, community and education leaders chose the 28 winners through use of a comprehensive and detailed rubic. Here is what one of the judges had to say about the assignment: "I found it to be an inspiring and humbling experience. I am awed by the passion, commitment, creativity and energy of these candidates. Having been a principal, I know the energy it takes to keep a school moving forward; but these people have taken that concept to new levels! At times I was moved to tears by the testimonials of the candidates' supporters; these principals are clearly making a difference in the lives of many people and all are surely deserving of the title of Canada's Outstanding Principal."

As well as being recognized and celebrated, Ms. Murry and Mr. Rodgers, along with their fellow award winners, participated in a four-day executive leadership development experience at the internationally recognized University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management from Febuary 23-26. While in Toronto they had an opportunity to dialogue and reflect on leadership issues with other renowned leaders from the educational, social, cultural and business communities.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association would like to congratulate both winners on this very deserving award.

RESOURCES

VIVALDI AND THE FOUR SEASONS

The National Arts Centre will be distributing, in the spring of 2005, a Teacher Resource Kit entitled *Vivaldi and the Four Seasons*.

The kit is designed to help generalist educators teach music to school children. Teachers and students can discover Vivaldi's life, times and music with the help of innovative lesson plans and student activity sheets. The kit contains information to help students learn about the four seasons through music, language arts, social studies, science, visual arts, drama and First Nations storytelling.

There are additional resources available on the NAC's performing arts website, ArtsAlive.ca, including music curriculum requirements for each province to show how the lessons and activities can best be used by teachers.

LONG LIVE KIDS

The *Long Live Kids* campaign is an initiative of the Children's Healthy Active Living Program. This one-of-a-kind Canadian collaboration between government, issue experts, community partners and industry was created by Concerned Children's Advertisers to provide Canadian children with tools for healthy eating, active living and improved media literacy in order to support a balanced lifestyle and achieve optimal health and development.

Schools and community organizations across Canada can order free of charge the *Long Live Kids* CD-ROM and workshop that pairs a 60-second commercial that emphasizes the link between food consumption and energy production and encourages children to use that energy to play and be active with the more extensive facts and concepts on developing and maintaining a balanced, healthy lifestyle. Lesson plans and tips and tools for parents and educators are also available on the Concerned Children's Advertisers website at www.cca-kids.ca.

2005 NATIONAL COUNSELLING CONFERENCE

May 24-27, 2005

St. John's. The Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association (NLCPA) is co-hosting with the Canadian Counselling Association (CCA) the 2005 National Counselling Conference. The conference promises to be three days of interesting speakers, intensive professional development and Newfoundland hospitality. For more information check out the conference website at www.ccacc2005.ca or contact conference co-chairs Chris Cooper at ccooper@nf.sympatico.ca or Alana Walsh-Giovannini at alanag57@stemnet.ca.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS CONFERENCE

May 25-26, 2005

College of the North Atlantic, Stephenville. For information contact Michael Murrin, Tel: 709-646-2822; Fax: 709-646-5263; mike.murrin@wnlsd.ca.

FORESTRY EDUCATION SUMMER TEACHERS' RESOURCE INSTITUTE

July 5-8, 2005

UNB, Fredericton. The Fundy Model Forest invites you to participate in a summer institute (free of charge). For further information and a registration form contact Marie-Paule McNutt, Technical Team Leader, UNB Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Management, mpmcnutt@unb.ca, Tel: 506-453-4905. ***Note:*** Registrations due by May 16, 2005.

HISTORICA'S TEACHERS' INSTITUTES

July 2005

Make history come alive in your classroom by attending Historica's renowned Teachers' Institute. The Secondary School Teachers' Institute will be held in Winnipeg from July 4 -10. The Middle School (Grades 3-9) Teachers' Institute will be held in Montreal from July 3-9. Cost: $500 (covers registration, flight, accomodations and most meals). For further information and application form visit www.histori.ca.

COUNCIL OF SPECIAL SERVICES FALL WORKSHOP SERIES

September/October 2005

ADHD and Learning Disabilities: Strategies for School Success (K-8): Sept. 24, 2005, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm., Delta Hotel, St. John's. Featuring internationally renowned speaker/author and award-winning teacher, Sandra Rief. This comprehensive workshop focuses on preventing and managing challenging behaviors in the classroom. It includes instructional strategies that engage students' attention, interest, and active participation, and academic scaffolds/supports that are necessary for success of students in the regular classroom.

Teaching in the Mixed Ability Classroom (Layered Curriculum and Brain Research) (K-12): Oct. 17, 2005, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm, Hotel Gander. Featuring author, speaker and teacher Dr. Kathie Nunley. This workshop begins with a fun and humorous overview of how the brain learns. The biology/brain imaging research is then incorporated into Layered Curriculum, a practical solution for juggling inclusion, diversity, learning styles, multiple intelligences and mind styles in the regular classroom without sacrificing standards.

Understanding and Working with the Challenging Student (Behavior Management) (K-8): Oct. 21, 2005, 9:00 am - 4:00 pm, Mount Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor. Featuring the Co-ordinator of the Centre of Excellence for Behavior Management and School Psychologist, Eva DeGosztonyi. Participants will be provided a powerful framework for understanding challenging students in our schools and manage challenging behavior both in and outside the classroom. Teachers will also leave with a variety of strategies geared towards minimizing the effects of immaturity and increasing the rate of compliance in the school setting.

For more information contact Keith Adey at 709-292-5727. Full workshop details and registration forms will be published in the next COSS newsletter. If you are not a COSS member please check with your NLTA school representative who should have a copy of the newsletter when printed.

NLTA BRANCH ELECTIONS

May – June 2005

- Would you like to be more involved in decisions affecting your professional and personal future?
- Do you feel you have skills or abilities which you can offer to your professional Association?
- Would you like to be more informed about, and involved in, the internal operations of your Association?

Then consider becoming a member of your branch leadership team by offering yourself for a position on the branch executive when branch elections are held this spring. **Contact a member of your branch executive or your NLTA School Representative for more details.**

Dates to Remember

April 2005

Apr 30	**Deadline:** Deferred Salary Leave Applications
Apr 30	**Deadline:** Year-end resignation from contract

May 2005

May 7	**Deadline:** Notification by Board of layoff
May 8-14	Branch Election Week
May 19	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications
May 27-28	NLTA Executive Meeting

June 2005

June 15	**Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests

July 2005

July 31	**Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship Applications